

Ripon & District U3A Newsletter

May 2026

Chairman's Report April 2026

Welcome to the first Newsletter of the new u3a year! That said, of course, we have yet to hold our AGM for 2025/26 and we are still in that period where we still have members renewing their membership – which, I hope, you will all do. You will find the details of the AGM below; I hope you will be able to attend.

John Thompson

Dates for your diary:

April this year will be book-ended with treats. The month begins with Easter and all the delicious (but very sinful!) chocolate treats associated with that welcome spring festival and towards the end you can learn all about Medieval Feasting.

Yes, our medieval forbears certainly knew how to throw caution to the wind when it came to letting their hair down and throwing one heck of a party.

So, forget the post-Easter diet and come along to Ripon Rugby Club on Monday, 27th April at 2pm when Maria Liotta will let us into the secrets of having a good time - the medieval way!



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The Monthly Meeting in May will be, as usual on the fourth Monday i.e. 25th May even though it will be the Spring Bank Holiday.

See you there.

Janet Sutton Vice-Chair, Ripon and District u3a

Annual General Meetings

AGMs are not noted for being good for your health but our up-coming AGM on Monday, 25th May promises to buck the trend and be very good for you indeed.

This is because after the AGM Alan Swann will be speaking to us (in person and not via zoom) on the topic of “Laughter is the Best Medicine”.

So, whatever you have planned for Monday, 25th May make Ripon u3a’s AGM the priority. Come along to Ripon Rugby Club for 2pm to be part of the crucial running of your u3a and hear a most excellent talk which will be absolutely guaranteed to boost your spirits.

If anyone still needs convincing perhaps the promise of free entry together with free unlimited refreshments might help to make up their mind!

See you there.

Janet Sutton, Vice-Chair Ripon u3a.

**Ripon and District u3a
Notice of the Annual General Meeting
Monday 25th of May at Ripon Rugby Club at 14.00pm**

• NB Please note the Financial Statement and the Treasurer’s Report will be available at the AGM We do hope you will attend the AGM and **please ensure you sign in on arrival.**

There is no charge for attendance or coffee/tea/biscuits.

The AGM will be followed by an interactive and amusing talk by Alan Swann from Barnsley u3a. Alan is always a delight, for those who came to his last talk you will recall we learned how to count in Japanese!!! Guaranteed entertaining for after the AGM.

A Committee Nomination form is distributed with this notice and AGM Agenda. Please consider joining the committee it is for all of us to shape the future of Ripon and District u3a. Please return completed forms to me at Stonehaven North Stainley Ripon HG4 3HT by the 28th of April 2026 alternatively hand then to me at the Monthly meeting on the 27th of April.

Glenys Bailey, Ripon and District Secretary

**Ripon and District u3a
Notice of the Annual General Meeting
Monday 25th of May at Ripon Bowling Club at 14.00pm**

Agenda

- 1/ Welcome and Apologies
- 2/ Adoption of the AGM Minutes 2025
- 3/ Adoption of the Accounts and Treasurers Report
- 4/ Appointment of external Auditor
- 5/ Election of Officers
 - Chair

- Vice Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary

- 6/ Election of non-officer committee members
- 7/ Chairman’s Report
- 8/ Any other business

Following the AGM there will be a brief interval followed by a ZOOM talk by Alan Swann.



RIPON & DISTRICT u3a

Committee Nomination Form 2026

If you would like to know more about the work of the committee and/or like to discuss becoming a nominee, please contact any of the committee members who will be delighted to discuss this with you.

Name of nominee**Membership No**

Position for which nominated

Name of proposer **Date****Membership No**.....

Name of seconder**Date****Membership No**.....

I,accept the above nomination

.....(signature of nominee)

Nominee, proposer and seconder must all be fully paid-up members of Ripon & District u3a, but not current committee office-holders.

Please return completed nomination forms no later than **28th of April 2026** to:
Glenys Bailey Stonehaven North Stainley Ripon North Yorkshire HG4 3HT.

Whist Group



I am pleased to report that our Whist group is continuing to grow and we have a very enjoyable afternoon, we have just a few more spaces available and anyone wishing to join us will receive a warm welcome plus a free taster game!

The cost for the afternoon is £3 which includes refreshments. It is progressive whist so a good way to meet new people, socialise and keep the mind sharp! We meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month at St Wilfred's Community Hall, at 1.30 for a 1.45 start and we finish at 4.15. Contact details are on the Ripon U3A website under the groups heading.

Brenda Jackson (Group Leader)

Science for All Group

For our next Science Group meeting on Monday 11 May, 2pm Sharow VH –
We have - David Moody on Space & Space Law.



Then on Monday 8 June, Stuart Ward returns with Deep Sea Diving.

Allerton Waste recovery visit 14 July. I have confirmed to you your place on this visit if you have contacted me. There are still a number of places available, but please be aware of the following guidance from Allerton Park:-

It is essential that all visitors wear appropriate clothing and footwear for an industrial site visit. Footwear must have thick soles and fully enclosed toes; open-toed shoes, high heels, or any footwear that leaves skin exposed are not permitted. Legs must also be fully covered.

Trousers are recommended, although leggings or similar full-length garments are acceptable.

Please note that individuals who are not dressed appropriately will not be permitted to take part in the site tour.

As you will be visiting a waste processing facility, please be aware that there may be a residual odour on clothing, particularly woolen clothing, following the visit.

Due to the potential risk of infection, individuals who are immunocompromised, have recently undergone an organ transplant, or are currently receiving chemotherapy are advised not to participate in the on-site tour.



By now I hope you have all renewed your u3a membership. If not, we have a waiting list & you will be deleted as a member.

For further information or to contact me see the Ripon & District U3A Website
Keith Surman

Singing for Fun

This friendly group of enthusiastic singers meets at Allhallowgate, in the Community Centre Hall on the second Friday of the month at 11.00a.m. There are usually about twenty ladies and gentlemen making a lively contribution! The session lasts for a good hour and features mainly unison singing but includes a round or two and some short harmony sections in well-known songs. No experience is necessary – just a willingness to have a go! There is a small cost of £3 payable on the day to cover the room hire fee and photocopying.



Collectables Group



This group would welcome you to our monthly meeting. You just bring along an item(s) and tell the group about it and about how you got it. Then show it to the group for about 5 mins. If you want to know about something the other members will bring their knowledge and expertise.

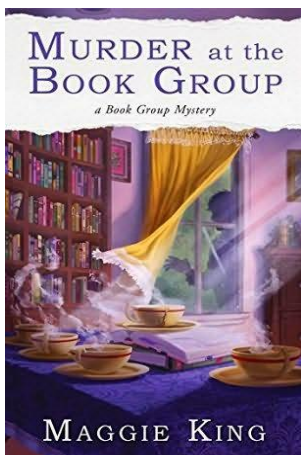
If this sounds like you, you can come along to a meeting in May (14th) or June (11th) in May we will be looking at money.

We meet at Sunnyfield Lodge, Fennel Grove, HG4 2SZ which is on the Old Ripon College Campus, off College Rd at 2.00pm.

Contact Gwyn via the u3a website if you would like to join us.

Book Group

Currently meets on 2nd Thursdays at Wakeman's Café.



The group is about to have a change of leader: Val Mason (assisted by Hilary Cocker) is taking over from Karen Clark (ably assisted by Karen Rimmer). Many thanks and appreciation to them both for their dedication and organisation over the past few years.

Members take it in turns to choose a title and lead the discussion for a given month on a rota basis. There is no restriction on genre. Not everyone agrees on what constitutes *a good read*, which makes for some very lively discussions!

The group membership presently stands at its maximum permitted by the venue but those interested in joining should not hesitate to contact Val via the u3a website, as there might be space in the future.

This Photo by Unknown

I certainly hope not
– Editor!!

Family History Group



Family History Group Member
Marguerite Moss with a sketch of
her father.

At our face-to-face meeting on 9 April members shared their stories about employment in 1921 and the social changes our ancestors were living through.

Firstly, we heard about 'Aunty Nellie' who had lived at the same house in Harehills, Leeds all her life. Just around the corner on Hudson Road was the entrance to Burton's Tailoring Factory, started in 1921. Outside there is a Blue Plaque to the founder, a Jewish refugee from Lithuania who changed his name to Montague Burton, '*The Tailor of Taste making good quality made-to-measure suits for a week's wages.*'

By 1921 this was the largest clothing factory in the world, eventually employing 10,500 people. Leeds was already a garment city so labour was plentiful. In 1929 Burtons had 400 shops and their own weaving mills. They made military uniforms and demob suits.

Burtons were generous employers. As well as its state-of-the art catering facilities/staff canteen, the factory had a medical clinic and rest rooms. Sports field and recreation grounds were provided in 1935.

We also discovered that our ancestors were more mobile and often moving into urban areas to take advantage of the diverse job opportunities (Journalist, Solicitor, Head Teacher). Some did remain on the land but chiefly as farmers on their own account and employing their own family rather than agricultural labourers.

One researcher was surprised to discover that a relative had left London and was following his trade (Jeweler) in Newcastle. Nearby, in the coastal resort of Whitley Bay, we found Henry Holt Beattie, a professional photographer who was employed by Captain Gladstone Adams, Photographer, car enthusiast, Reconnaissance Officer and inventor. In his 'spare time' he was Chairman of Whitley Bay Urban District Council.

Our Next Meeting is on Thursday 14 May (Zoom)

Our guest speaker is **Sarah Lister who will talk about Migration in 19th Century Craven.**

Dog Walking Group



Our walking group with dogs continues to enjoy meeting on (mostly) the first Monday of the month around 9.15am. By agreement when it falls on a bank holiday another date is chosen. The group is run via WhatsApp for ease of communication and updates.



We enjoyed a particularly sunny loop from Burton Leonard via Bishop Monkton. Participants take it in turns to suggest walks so widening the knowledge and interest of members who obviously are very regular walkers and enjoy a change of scenery!

You don't have to have a dog to join us!

Local History Group

On **Thursday 23 April** at 10.00am at Ripon Rugby Club we will welcome **David Banks**, a National Trust speaker, who will give a presentation entitled: '**From Unloved to World Class - The National Trust at its Best**'.

David describes this as "A pictorial journey on how the National Trust has transformed the Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal 800-acre estate. He will be using unseen photographs which show that the site had lost its beauty and tranquillity - due to lack of funding - until the NT took ownership in 1983 and carefully restored it into a spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Site for everyone to enjoy".



On Thursday 28 May the presentation will be given by **Hilary Jones**, vice-chair of The Milestones Society. Hilary was with us in September 2023 and gave a fascinating talk on Milestones. This time she will cover **Boundary Stones – Discovering hidden history in the landscape**.

The cost of unlimited refreshments from when we arrive, and in a short break half way through David's presentation, is currently only £2 a person – which all goes to our hosts at the Rugby Club.

Guests are welcome to come along to one of our meetings, for which there will be a further payment of £2 - which goes towards the hire of the clubhouse, and any speaker expenses. To attend any subsequent meetings a guest must also be a member of Ripon u3a.

A reminder that the £10 annual membership is due next Thursday. This enables you to attend 8 meetings between now and March 2027. We also pay Ripon Rugby Club £2 a head for refreshments.

Alternatively, you may pay £2 (+ £2 refreshments payment) each month to attend individual meetings. There are no meetings at the Rugby Club in June, July, August, and December.

We have organised a choice of 2 trips away from the club in June. On Thursday 25th June to be accurate.

We will start 2 lists, at next week's meeting, of those members who are interested in going on one of the trips.

The Bellman trip is entirely FREE, but limited to the first 10 people who would like to go.

The Aldborough visit will cost £5 – which may be paid at next Thursday's meeting, or at the May 28th meeting – but please enter your name on the list, so that we can keep an eye on the numbers wishing to visit.

Entry is actually FREE to the site, as is the guided tour. But English Heritage suggest a minimum 'donation' from each visitor, towards the upkeep of the site – because it is not normally open on Thursdays! Remember, only a maximum of 30 places.

The first option: Ripon City Bellman and Mayor's Serjeant, **Geoffrey Johnson** will give us a private viewing of the City Regalia in The Mayor's Parlour in Ripon Town Hall. I will also be asking Geoffrey a few questions about his roles, and about his years of service for Ripon and its Council. We hope to be able to look into the impressive Council Chamber while we are there. This should all take about 45 minutes, after which we can go into the market to watch his very short performance at 11.00 precisely! He's a shy, quiet man, but fastidious about ringing open the Thursday market dead on the stroke of 11.00am.

I find Geoffrey to be a quiet, charming, but very reliable man, particularly when it comes to ringing open the Thursday market precisely on time at 11.00am.

The second option: A guided tour of **Aldborough Roman Town**, near Boroughbridge, and its museum, has been arranged for up to 30 of our members. Two knowledgeable guides will be provided by The Friends of Roman Aldborough. We will split into 2 groups of 15, at 10.00 and roughly 10.15am. However, English Heritage suggest a 'donation' of £5 a person for a private visit to their site on a day that it is closed to the general public.

I do hope all of that is clear, but if not please contact me via the u3a website or at next Thursday's meeting.

Walking Group

Please remember to contact the leader if you intend to join the walk. If you are not a member, but are thinking of joining the group, please contact the leader of the Walking Group, whose contact details are on the website.

Monday 6th May Janice S will lead a 4-mile local history walk New Park - Knox. 9.25am 36 bus from Ripon to Redfearn's Garage. Walk ends in Killinghall for bus back. Please note: no toilets on this walk.

Thursday 14th May Margaret D will lead a 6½ mile circular walk in Coverdale, from Middleham. Meet at 10.30am outside Richard III pub in Middleham. Bring refreshments for 1 coffee stop and lunch. Car sharing encouraged - contact the leader.

Tuesday 19th May Mary D will lead a 4-mile circular walk from Quarry Moor, Ripon via Littlethorpe. Meet at 10.00am at the car park. Bring drink and snack for 1 stop en route. There are stiles.

Wednesday 27th May Kath B will lead a 4-mile circular walk from the canal basin, via the canal and Wetlands Nature Reserve, return via Fishergreen. Meet at 10.00am at the car park. Drink and snack for 1 stop.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC

Psychology

The next meeting has been moved from the Bank Holiday to Wednesday 6 May, 2.00 pm in Ripon Library. John Thompson

Photography

Here are two images taken from a recent meeting when members enjoyed a sunny afternoon wandering around Ripon and taking pictures. They were taken by Tony Green.

Our next meeting is a visit to the Himalayan Gardens on Wednesday 20 May. We are meeting at 11.00 am at the Gardens, although people are welcome to join the group



John Thompson

at any time during the day. If you are a group member, I will notify you if we need to change the venue because of predicted adverse weather. Potential new members are welcome to join us but please let me know if you are planning to do this so I can let you know if we change the arrangements.



This month's profile – Ripon & District u3a Vice Chair



Hello fellow members of Ripon and District u3a. My name is Janet Sutton, and I am currently the Vice-Chair of this wonderful organisation. May I extend an extra special welcome to any new members who are reading our newsletter for the first time. I hope you will soon find your feet, make new connections and generally benefit from the joys and pleasures that belonging to the u3a can bring. I have loved being a member of several u3a's since I retired some fourteen years ago. Goodness me, is it really fourteen years ago? Doesn't time fly when you are busy enjoying yourself!

My professional background is in nursing and in particular community nursing. This stood me in good stead as I moved around from the North to the West Midlands, to Chester, up to the Scottish Borders and finally to North Yorkshire. This seems like a good opportunity to say, "Thank You" to all the wonderful folk in Ripon u3a who made me feel so welcome those few years ago and in particular to those who have become the most special friends.

I belong to several of our interest groups and lead both the Play Reading for Pleasure Group and the Have Your Say Group. Both are challenging but good fun, too and I would urge all of you to help to lead one of our interest groups, join the committee or maybe start a group if your particular passion is not represented here in Ripon u3a. I also help to organise our Monthly Meetings at Ripon Rugby Club so please come and say "Hello" the next time you see me there. Recommendations for excellent speakers are always gratefully received too, of course.

I'll close by echoing our Chair John Thompson and inviting you to guess whether or not I'm lying to you when I tell you that one of my cousins is married to the actress, Sarah Lancashire.

Kind regards, Janet



True??

Ed

A nice picture from the recent role holder lunch from Karen

Deadline for the June Newsletter

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this May Newsletter. Copy for the June and all following Newsletters to reach the editor as soon as possible but by **21st of each month** at the latest.

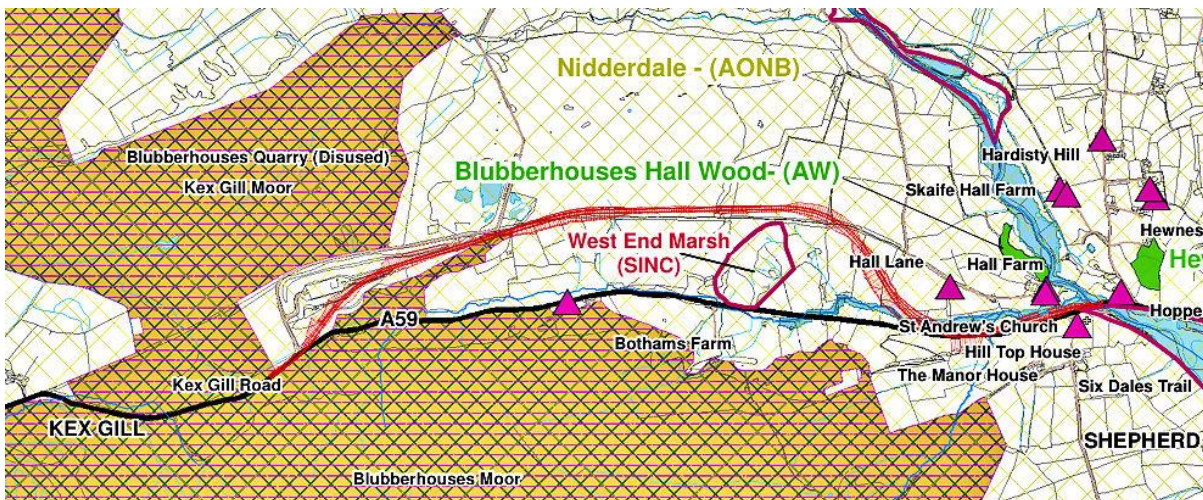


Interesting Information - Kex Gill – the end of a 26-year road problem insight

A visit to site & contractor's briefing at Kex Gill February 2026

There are only four main East - West roads across the Pennines in the North of England. One of these is the A59 Harrogate – Skipton which passes over Kex Gill Moor, not the highest of crossing points but is the only one where both the east and west approaches are in the same county. The two-lane eastern approach through Kex Gill is the narrowest of all four crossings; now carries some 8000 vehicles per day, and since 2000 has suffered 15 landslips causing many lengthy closures, diversions, delays and never- ending repair costs. With this section of road deemed beyond repair, the only solution would have to be a major re-alignment of the road. However, any new road in the Nidderdale (AONB) area would have to comply with significant constraints arising therefrom. In addition, several other sensitivities would have to be respected, these being (SSSI) designated West Nidderdale, Barden and Blubberhouses Moors; (SINC) designated West End Marsh & Fewston Reservoir; (SAC) designated North Pennine Moors and others.

Map of Sensitivities as prepared by John Sisk & Son, Construction Contractors & NYCC



NYCC conducted detailed engineering surveys for 16 different route options with the final agreed route shown in red on the map. John Sisk & Son were awarded the contract and work began in 2023.

In summary the scope of the contract would include

1. Construction of a new two-lane carriageway of 3 miles leaving the current road at Blubberhouses and veering uphill with an immediate climb to some 600 ft before levelling off to rejoin the existing A59 road on Blubberhouses Moor. There will be an additional crawler lane on the new westbound climb which will be a similar road arrangement to that already existing on the uphill western approach from Bolton Abbey to the high point.
2. Building in a special double drainage blanket using best quality 6C Yorkshire quarried aggregate beneath the new three lane ascent section to help stabilise the structure of the new road.
3. The diversion of Hall Beck, an important water source feeding into Fewston Reservoir, through culverts beneath the new road and, in view of the latest climate change predictions, the new water course to be widened from one metre to two metres. To complicate matters further

conservation constraints would prevent any work on this new water course being done during the annual spawning season May – October.

4. The construction of 12 new structural elements including new underpasses for farm vehicle / animal access and new culverts to ensure water can flow safely beneath the new road as well as enabling badgers, otters and other wildlife to pass through or nest.
5. A full redesign of the Church Hill junction at Blubberhouses to enable safer access to meet the new road being built at a higher level.

To carry out this contract, whilst complying with the varied environmental requirements, the contractor's work would require

6. The movement of more than 700,000 tons of soil to make and grade the new road
7. Transporting to site some 40,000 tons of asphalt and road surfacing materials
8. The building of over two miles of new bridleways
9. Having to undertake the dismantling, re-positioning and re-building of 4 miles of natural stone walling, one of the largest dry-stone walling projects in the UK
10. The laying of more than 5 miles of new drainage and 7 miles of utility diversions
11. The removal of some 4000 trees followed by the planting of 12,000 new trees

As will have become obvious this all adds up to a major project for any construction company with Sisk employing some 60–100 persons on site-works together with 30 admin staff and engineers. For North Yorkshire CC this new road has become their most ambitious, environmentally difficult and costly road project to which they have ever committed. With this new road, now in the final stages of construction, recent cost estimates agreed have now reached £82 million, £50 million of which will be funded by central Government. Whilst completion of some landscaping and general maintenance work will continue until mid-2027, the good news from the contractor was that they are hopeful the new road will finally open for first traffic by the end of June 2026.



Extensive site briefing by Sisk



6C drainage aggregate



Kex Gill site visit to new road start near Blubberhouses

Kex Gill site visit - new drainage and tree planting in progress

Rodney Towers

April 2026

Photographs Rodney Towers



Acknowledgements

Sisk, main contractors, for their approval of the content of this feature and Sensitivities Map. Sisk is an Irish fifth generation family business founded in Cork in 1859, which has grown to become the largest construction company in Ireland with significant growth across the UK and other territories.

Washburn Heritage Centre, Fewston, for arranging the site visit.

Alex Rosser, WHC member for visit notes.

Acronyms used

AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

SSSI Site of Special Scientific Interest

SINC Sites of Importance for Natural Conservation

SAC Special Area of Conservation

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